

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6885

INFO USICA WASHDC

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NDJAMENA 1555

USICA - FOR AF

E.O.11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: PSYCHOLOGICAL SITUATION IN CHAD

1. ANALYSIS THAT FOLLOWS HAS BEEN WORKEDOUT BY PAO
FROM EXTENSIVE CHADIAN CONTACTS AND REPRESENTS HIS
GUESS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SITUATION PREVAILING AMONG
CHADIANS AT PRESENT TIME

2. AS TIME GOES ON AND REBEL FORCES CONTINUE TO
DEMONSTRATE THEIR STRENGTH BY TAKING VILLAGES OF VARYING
SIZES, AN INCREASING DISCONTENTMENT WITH THE CENTRAL
GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO GOVERN AND PROTECT IS FELT AMONG
THE POPULACE.

3. THERE ARE, OF COURSE, CONSIDERABLE NUMBEROF
APATHETIC CHADIANS WHO DO NOT REALLY CARE WHO GOVERNS.
FOR THE MOST PART, THEY ARE THE ONES OUTSIDE THE
POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SPHERE OF THE COUNTRY AND
REPRESENT THE MOST UNEDUCATED.

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4. LEAVING THIS GROUP ASIDE, HOWEVER, EACH REBEL
SUCCESS CONTRIBUTES TO THE FEELING THAT THE PRESENT
GOVERNMENT IS INCAPABLE OF HOLDING THE FORT. PUBLIC
SUPPORT ERODES ALMOST DAILY AND RELIABLE REPORTS INDICATE
THAT FROLINAT RECRUITING SUCCESSES SHOW UPSURGES AFTER
EACH REBEL SUCCESS, NOT ONLY IN NDJAMENA BUT

ALSO IN PROVINCES AND PARTICULARLY UP NORTH IN
INSECURE PORTIONS.

5. FRENCH EFFORTS TO HOLD ATTHE NEO-MAGINOT LINE,
EVEN IF SUCCESSFUL, WILL PROBABLY FAIL TO IMPACT UPON
THIS SENSE OF PREVAILING DEFEATISM. THE PRESENT
GOVERNMENT, RELATIVE NEOPHYTES REGARDING THE USAGE
OF PROPGANDA AND PUBLIC INFORMATION, WILL NOT BE
ABLE TO SWAY THE TIDE WITH WORDS. WHAT IS NEEDED TO
RESTORE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT IS A
LEGITMATE OFFENSIVE MILITARY VICTORY. SOMETHING
LIKE THE RETAKING OF FAYA LARGEAU WOULD DO MUCH TO
CONTRIBUTE TO THE PERCEPTION OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT
AS A CAPABLE AGGRESSIVE BODY OF MEN WITH SUBSTANTIAL
MILITARY CLOUT. SUCH A SUCCESS IS, OF COURSE,
IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT OVERT AND AGGRESSIVE FRENCH
MILITARY SUPPORT WHICH, AT THEPRESENT TIME, DOES NOT
SEEM TO BE IN THE CARDS.

6. MEANWHILE, REPORTS INDICATE INCREASING DISCONTENT
ON PART OF MILITARY MEN, PARTICULARLY NON-COMMISSIONED
OFFICERS WHOSE FORCE HAS BEEN DECIMATED BY RECENT
DEFEATS AT FAYA AND BARDAI LAST YEAR. BASICALLY HARD-
LINERS, THEY ARE IMPATIENT AT THE PERCEIVED LACK OF
LEADERSHIP ABILITY OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT.
ESSENTIALLY LEADERLESS AND UNEDUCATED, THEY WILL
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PROBABLY DO LITTLE MORE THAN MUTTER, BUT DISCONTENTED
SOLDIERS--WHAT FEW REMAIN-- WILL NOT DO MUCH FOR
THE PRESENT SITUATION OF THE GOVERNMENT, DESERTIONS
APPARENTLY ARE RUNNING HIGH DESPITE RECRUITING EFFORTS
ON THE PART OF THE GOC.

7. THE QUOTE INTELLECTUALS UNQUOTE, A SMALL BODY
OF PEOPLE WITH NO DISCERNIBLE POLITICAL CLOUT, WERE
STRONG SUPPORTERS OF NEGOTIATIONS, BUT WITH THE PRESENT
BREAKDOWN, EVEN THEY ARE BECOMING MORE AND MORE
PESSIMISTIC.

8. MEANWHILE, A HERETOFORE QUIESCENT 95 PERCFNT
SARA UNIVERSITY STUDENT BODY SEEMS TO BE AWAKENING
AND, WITH AN ALMOST AUDIBLE RIP VAN WINKLE GULP,
HAS REALIZED IT HAS AN AWFUL LOT TO LOSE IN A
NORTHERN-DOMINATED UNIVERSITY SYSTEM. THEY HAVE
REQUESTED --AND HAVE BEEN GIVEN--MEETING WITH
MEMBERS OF THE SMC. REPORTS INDICATE THAT THE SMALL
NUMBER OF ARAB STUDENTS AND PROFESSORS AT THE
UNIVERSITY ARE BEING OPENLY DISCRIMINATED AGAINST.
ARAB PROFESSORS ARE REPORTEDLY BEING DENIED THE USE

OF CLASSROOMS TO MEET THEIR COMMITMENTS.

9. ANOTHER INDICATION OF THE INCREASING ISOLATION
OF THE SARAS ARE RECENT DISTURBANCES IN BONGOR IN
THE PREFECTURE OF MAYO-KEBI. ACRIMONIOUS FEELINGS ARE
DEVELOPING ON THE PART OF THE NON-SARA MAJORITY IN THAT
AREA OVER PERCEIVED (AND ACTUAL) SARA DOMINATION.
REPORTS OF ROADBLOCKS AND GENERAL HARRASSMENT OF
SARAS HAVE COMETO THE EMBASSY'S ATTENTION.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 NDJAMENA 1555

10. IF THE MUCH BANDIED ABOUT RUMORS OF URBAN
TERRORISM EVER DO INDEED COME TO PASS, A FRENCH EXODUS
OF PRIVATE CITIZENS CANBE EXPECTED TO PROBABLY TAKE
PLACE, THE GOVERNMENT WILL PROBABLY INSTITUTE
REPRESSIVE MEASURES AGAINST THE POPULACE AND THE
REBELS WILL DEMONSTRATE THAT EVEN NDJAMENA IS NOT
SAFE. IF THE REBELS PLAY IT RIGHT AND CONFINE
THEIR ATTTKKS TO EXPATRIATES OR GOVERNMENTAL OFFICIALS,
THEY SHOULD PROBABLY GAIN SUPPORT. SHOULD THEY
SUCCUMB TO THE LURE OF INDISCRIMINATE ATTACKS, THERE
COULD BE A PRO-GOVERNMENT GROUNDSWELL. IT SHOULD
NOT BE FORGOTTEN THAT NDJAMENA IS REPORTEDLY SOME
50 PERCENT MUSLIM. THE GOC POLICE FORCE IS WEAK
OPPORTUNITIES AND SECURE PLACES ABOUND FOR TERRORISTS.
THEY WOULD NO DOUBT FIND SUBSTANTIAL SUPPORT AMONG
THE POPULACE OF NDJAMENA, ALREADY DIVIDED INTO ETHNIC
ENCLAVES OF SARA AND ASAB QUARTERS.

11. ANY ATTEMPTS BY THE PRESENT SARA GOVERNMENT TO

BRING NORTHERNERS INTO THE RULING STRUCTURE WOULD
BE SEEN BY THE MOST OBSERVERS AS TOO LITTLE TOO LATE
AND IT IS DIFFICULT TO FATHOM WHY ANY SELF-RESPECTING
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NORTHERNER WOULD WANT TO JOIN UP WITH WHAT. AT THE PRESENT TIME LOOKS LIKE A LOSING CAUSE. THERE MAY BE A FEW QUOTE UNCLE TOMS UNQUOTE WHO MAY COME ALONG AT THIS LATE DATE, BUT THEIR FOLLOWING WOULD BE RELATIVELY INSIGNIFICANT IN TERMS OF POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND MILITARY CLOUT.

12. INCREASING ISOLATION OF THE SARA GOVERNMENT CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE, THEN, SHORT OF A MASSIVE MILITARY VICTORY. THAT THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT HAS HELD ON THIS LONG DESPITE ETERNAL PREDICTIONS OF ITS IMMINENT DOWNFALL IS A TRIBUTE TO PRESIDENT MALLOUM'S ASTUTENESS IN JUGGLING ALL THE FACTIONS AROUND HIM. BUT THE JUGGLER IS TIRED AND EACH TIME ANOTHER BALL IS INTRODUCED INTO THE ACT, IT BECOMES MORE AND MORE DIFFICULT TO CONTINUE THE PERFORMANCE SUCCESSFULLY. IT COULD BE THAT WHEN ONE FALLS, ALL FALL.

13. WHAT REMAINS THEN, IS THE FRENCH AND THE DEPTH OF THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE PRESENT PRO-WESTERN GOVERNMENT AND TO A SARA-DOMINATED CHAD. IF IT IS STRONG, AND THE NEO-MAGINOT LINE HOLDS, THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT, WITH PERHAPS A FEW COSMETIC CHANGES, CAN MAINTAIN ITS POWER BASE UNLESS URBAN TERRORISM COMES TO PASS. THE REBELS AND QADHAFI ARE UPPING THE ANTE FOR THE FRENCH AND THINKING CHADIANS ARE WATCHING THE SITUATION CAREFULLY. HOPE MAY SPRING ETERNAL IN TIMES LIKE THIS AND THE DIEHARDS STILL WAIT FOR SIGNS OF AMERICAN ASSISTANCE AGAINST THE PERCEIVED SOVIET/LIBYAN THREAT. THE IRONY OF IT ALL IS THAT LESS THAN THREE YEARS AGO IT WAS THE PRESENT GOC THAT THREW OUT THE FRENCH MILITARY UMBRELLA, A MOVE WHICH AT THAT TIME MET WITH POPULAR APPROVAL. SOME 500 OF

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CHAD'S REMAINING SOLDIERS ARE BASED AT NDJAMENA'S 27TH OF SEPTEMBER CAMP, NAMED AFTER THE DATE OF THE FRENCH DEPARTURE IN 1975, HOPING THAT THE FRENCH WILL BE BACK. THERE DOES NOT SEEM TO BE MUCH ELSE TO HOPE FOR NOW. POLITICS DOES, INDEED, MAKE FOR STRANGE BEDFELLOWS. DALSIMER

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